CHAPTER IV.

INSPECTION OF MAMLATDAR'S OFFICES.

Preparation of Inspection Memo.

While you camp at Taluka headquarters, your Sheristedar and clerks will spend their mornings examining the accounts and records of the local Mamlatdar's office. This will take a week or so at least, and it is a good plan while this is going on, for you to make one or two flying visits, with light kit and with none of your office staff, to various less accessible parts of the Taluka and to return when the examination has been completed.

Your Sheristedar will then present you with a document of 50 pages or more detailing the various discrepancies and mistakes which he and his clerks have discovered in the Mamlatdar's office. See that the Inspection memo. is drawn up in accordance with paragraph 24 of the A. B. C. D list (1919) separating notes for guidance of the Mamlatdar from matters in which action is necessary. Go through it with the Sheristedar and with his help make certain that you understand *exactly* what each mistake is, and what are the orders which have been infringed, and, as far as you can, decide which faults are of importance and which points call for special attention by yourself.

"Care should be taken that important matter or matters bearing on the quality of a Mamlatdar's work are not lost in a mass of details. To say that no one in the position of Sheristedar or Karkun should be allowed so much power as to make it worth a Mamlatdar's while to gain his good-will is perhaps a counsel of perfection, but every one in the Kacheri may and

should understand that he has no final power either for praise or blame."

The next step is your visit to the Mamlatdar's office, or rather your visits, as it is not possible to complete the whole process in one morning. These must be timed early enough for the Mamlatdar's clerks to go home for their meals and to return in time to avoid inconvenience to the public by late opening of the office, so it is important to start your visit as early as possible. Visit to Office.

You may begin by taking a round of the Mamlatdar's office and compound, seeing that it is clean and tidy, and that the compound is free from rubbish and oddments; look inside the clerks' cupboards for evidence of mess and muddle or suppressed papers; have a look at the library; see that the notice board is kept up to date and is not a mass of illegible notices and proclamations; see that the Executive Engineer's certificate on the treasury has been renewed within the year; see if there are any prisoners in the lock-up, question them to find out how long they have been there, etc.

Then return to the Sub-Treasury and count the cash, stamps and opium, and, if there is one, the Currency Chest also. The instructions for this are given in Appendix H. Sub-Treasury.

While doing so, do not forget that the Mamlatdar, as head of his office, should be provided with a chair at the table at which you are working, and that he should be consulted on any points which may arise.

Observe the instructions for counting cash carefully. If you omit any of these, you might be held responsible

for any defalcations later discovered. Use intelligence in your method of check and do not always follow a particular routine. Your clerks, of course, will help you in the normal counting of small coins and of notes but in folding back some of the notes in a bunch, or in withdrawing some of the coins from a bag, try to vary the number folded over and the number of coins withheld.

Owing to the methods of Government account and the various checks, it is difficult for defalcations to occur, but occasionally try and think out, how, if you were a Sub-Treasury Officer, *you* would endeavour to rob Government and, *if* you can think of a practicable method, specially explore that avenue lest others be already using it.

For instance you might think it possible to abstract a few high value Court Fee stamped papers from their bundles and to substitute similar sized pieces of blank paper, which would pass in a hurried counting, and to dispose of those abstracted on the quiet at a discount to needy litigants. Therefore in counting stamped papers do not take it that any presumed bundle of 100 is correct, but extract a few of the papers and have the rest counted, and when that is done, see if those which you have, make up the deficit of 100.

Again if you think that you might make a flutter in the local market by "borrowing" ten or twenty thousand rupees in currency notes and replacing them regularly from your winnings before the next inspection, occasionally count a Sub-Treasury without notice. In general, however, the chances of your finding any excess or deficit in counting the Sub-Treasury are

extremely small, and it is possible by thinking out your methods carefully, to arrive at the most expeditious method of complying with the instructions. A case of fraud to the tune of half a lakh of rupees is described in Appendix C, so never neglect your checks.

Scruting of Inspection Memo.

Thereafter you can move to a table on the main verandah and go through the inspection memo, which your office has got ready, with the Mamlatdar, taking up each point in succession, listening to what he has to say, and calling for and seeing any papers which for elucidation it is necessary to see. Some of the points can be satisfactorily dealt with by discussion, and then can be at once struck off from the inspection memo. Other points will have to form the subject matter of enquiry and report by the Mamlatdar. Where you call for papers regarding any point raised in the inspection memo., make the clerk who deals with that subject in the Mamlatdar's office, bring them up in person.

Control Registers.

It is probable that you will find that much of the delay and disorganization in the average Mamlatdar's office is due to laxity in keeping control of correspondences sent to the Circle Inspector and Village Officer for report. Insist on the production of the Control Register, which shows the subject of every correspondence sent to these officials, its date of despatch, the reply and further disposal. Go through every item of this personally, and with the Mamlatdar issue orders for the disposal of any which has not been returned within reasonable time.

This brings up that important point in the organization of a Mamlatdar's office referred to at page 25. It is imperative that the Head Clerk (Aval Karkun)

should be held responsible for the running of the office, for the Mamlatdar, being on tour for half the month, cannot possibly control the routine. Therefore, it is not the Mamlatdar, but the Aval Karkun who must be blamed if you find 100 or more correspondences shown as lying undisposed of with Village Officers.

You will possibly find that this Control Register (*vide* Breviary paragraph 70) has not been kept properly upto date. You should verify it by calling the Circle Inspectors, who are waiting to bring up their pending papers, and check these in the Register and, if you find any omissions of entering either dispatch or receipt, you must assume this to be the fault of the Aval Karkun. A further check can of course be made by taking a note of correspondences with the Talatis in the Taluka and comparing those with the Register. If you find, as I have found, that nothing has been entered in this Register for weeks, give the Aval Karkun a couple of months' time to get it in order with every single correspondence with Circle Inspectors or Talatis entered up in it and then make a surprise inspection personally. If an Aval Karkun is to be promoted to be a Mamlatdar, he must be able to prove his capacity by controlling his office, and you need not hesitate to insist on his doing so.

Any censure on the Mamlatdar for not having kept his Aval Karkun up to the mark, should be reserved for when you see the Mamlatdar personally in private later.

A good deal of your office inspection note will deal with the work of the local Magistrates. Some of the

points noted will be mere errors by Magisterial clerks, others errors through lack of energy or of imagination by Magistrates, such as not seeing that the witness bhatta is paid on the same day. If serious errors in magisterial work are brought to notice, these are best reserved for personal discussion with the Magistrate later. (*See* Magisterial work, p. 64)

Taluka Establishment: Distribution of work.

Having finished the memo. of inspection, then take the chart of the distribution of work in the office (*vide* Breviary paragraph 4) and have each clerk in turn bring up all the papers, that he has lying with him, and the books and registers that he has to fill in. With the help of the Mamlatdar and your Sheristedar run through each case very rapidly to see that it is not being unduly delayed, and that is being intelligently dealt with, meanwhile seeing the Clerk's handwriting and questioning him to get an idea of his ability. Glance at Account Books and registers to see if they are neatly and legibly written, etc., etc., as well. This examination in practice will not take so very long, as some of the clerks, e.g., the Shroff, the Magisterial and the Record Clerk, have with them few correspondences. The more flagrant cases of delay and ineptitude will have been dealt with already in the Inspection memo. But you get some opportunity of judging the ability of each clerk, who is overworked and why, whether the distribution of work among clerks needs modification, how far the Aval Karkun is efficiently running the office, etc.—and you may find much that needs putting right.

Subject Circle Inspectors to the same examination.

Then take the establishment list of the Mamlatdar's office, call up again each clerk, candidate and Circle

Inspector in turn, praise him publicly for any satisfactory work you have found in your inspection (but do not censure publicly for any mistakes you may have found), and ask him if he has anything to say, or any request to make, and listen to him patiently. It is probable that you will not be able to give a definite answer at once, but do not forget to look into any grievance and to give him a written reply, under your own signature later.

The Mamlatdar's peons may be asked collectively, or through the Havildar, whether they have anything to say. They may ask for free Government quarters and you can then explain that there is no hope of getting them or for the provision of new uniform or of warm coats, which you can try and wangle out of an inadequate grant for clothing, or put in for a special grant to replace obviously worn out stuff.

Sub-Jail.

Then let the clerks and others go home for their meals. With the Aval Karkun and the clerk in charge of Magisterial work, visit the lock-up and sub-jail and enquire of the prisoners whether they have any complaints to make. If you can, see the food which they get, find out who supplies it, what is being paid for it, how many meals a day they are given. Sometimes there is a tendency on the part of contractor to cut down the number of meals to his own profit.

Be particular to enquire whether any prisoner has been here for an excessive period and, if so, why. If he is an under-trial prisoner before any Taluka Magistrate, see if he cannot be let out on bail. Be most particular to see that proper arrangements are as far as possible made for women prisoners and that children

are not kept in a lock-up. (*See* Bombay Children's Act, etc.) Make sure that the Aval-Karkun, if he is the official jailor, sees to Sub-Jail matters himself and does not leave these to a junior clerk, who leaves them to a peon, who does nothing.

All this will have taken probably more than one morning; but the more efficiently you can organise the Mamlatdar's office, the less work *you* will have, therefore it is worth while. In this connection read the Manual of Revenue Accounts, 5th edition, Taluka Notes, pages 3—6 which indicates points to be attended to in Taluka offices.

A, B, C, D lists deal with the filing and record of papers and will give you an idea of the multiplicity of subjects with which the Revenue Department has to deal. In addition, the 1914 edition of these lists has a preface which will be found useful when you come to examine the organization of your own or the Mamlatdar's office. A, B, C, D Lists.

Occasionally, if camping near or passing through a taluka town, pay a surprise visit to the Mamlatdar's office about 12 noon to see if all the staff have started work. If the Aval Karkun has not a cast iron reason for any absentee, he should get into serious trouble. In remote talukas, slackness very rapidly comes over an office with a poor head. Surprise visits.